

Today, Rep. Debbie Halvorson (IL-11) issued the following statement on President Obama's decision to deploy additional forces to Afghanistan:

"As a member of a military family who has seen a step-son injured in Afghanistan, I understand the challenges we face. The decision to send members of our armed forces into conflict is a very serious one and something I do not take lightly.

Our troops should never be put into harm's way without a clear mission and a distinct objective. President Obama laid out the worthy and important goal of protecting our national security by disrupting, dismantling and defeating Al-Qaeda and the Taliban to achieve greater stability in this dangerous region.

Earlier this year, I traveled to Afghanistan and spoke with our men and women fighting on the front lines. Keeping our nation secure and providing our troops the equipment and support they need has always been and remains my top priority. With Al-Qaeda still operating in Afghanistan and the Taliban gaining momentum, we cannot turn our back to the risks that still exist, and that our troops face every day. We must continue the work of preparing our partners in the Afghan Army and Police so they can take up this fight, defend their country, and secure their border with Pakistan.

Afghanistan is where the 9/11 attacks were launched, and effectively denying Al-Qaeda safe haven in both that country and Pakistan is critical to our security. To this end, the Pakistani government needs to join us in flushing out and defeating these forces and they must demonstrate progress on this front. I strongly believe the Karzai government, regional actors, and our international partners such as our NATO allies must meet our commitment with a dedicated effort of additional troops and resources.

I am committed to ensuring that the mission is carried out effectively, our goals are met, and our sons and daughters in uniform can return home to a nation made safer through their service. I am encouraged by what I heard from President Obama last night, but like every parent who has ever had a loved one serve overseas, there are questions we need addressed. Over the coming days I look forward to hearing additional details from the Administration in its testimony before Congress, so I can thoroughly review the specifics of this new strategy and its implementation."